

[English]

Railway Lines affected by Natural Calamities

1082. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Railway zones and extent of Railway lines in each zone affected by natural calamities during the current year;

(b) the total loss incurred on account of damage of bridges and railway lines due to natural calamities during the above period;

(c) whether work on repairing of such railway lines and bridges have been completed;

(d) if not, the extent of work done;

(e) the expenditure incurred thereon; and

(f) the number of trains and number of days for which such trains were cancelled due to the damage by natural calamities and accidents, separately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (f). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Installation of Radio Station

1083. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether any request from the State Government of Assam regarding installation of a Radio Station at Karimganj has been pending since long;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C M IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The scheme to set up a radio station at Karimganj in Assam was not a part of the approved 8th Plan. However, due to persistent demand, a scheme has been drawn up to set up a radio station with 20 KW MW Transmitter at Karimganj subject to availability of funds and other infrastructural facilities.

Modernisation of Public Sector Steel Plants

1084. DR KRUPASINDHU BHOI :

SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any plan for modernisation of VISL;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any other public sector steel plant is being modernised/proposed to be modernised; and

(d) if so, the details thereof including progress made so far and the amount spent/proposed to be spent thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b). Financial viability and availability of requisite financial resources are pre-requisites for modernisation of VISL. In the long term, M/s. M.N. Dastur and Co were engaged to make a detailed study on the turn around strategy of VISL. The report envisages capital expenditure of Rs. 43.42 crore under short term plan and Rs. 572.61 crore under long term plan. VISL Board in principle has approved the short term schemes. VISL is already discussing with CET, Ranchi, an in-house facility of SAIL for detailed engineering and implementation. This will cover Steel Melting Shop, Rolling Mills and Finishing Areas.

(c) and (d). SAIL has taken up modernisation of its three integrated steel plants at Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro. The details are given below.

A. Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP)

DSP modernisation is being implemented through 16 turnkey packages out of which 6 are global and 10 are indigenous. All major facilities have been completed/ commissioned and balance jobs are likely to be completed progressively by March 1997.

The updated cost estimates (base 3rd Quarter, 1996 prices) of DSP modernisation is about Rs. 4848 crore (under finalisation by SAIL). The cumulative expenditure till September, 1996 is Rs. 4347.72 crore.

B. Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP)

The total modernisation is being executed in two phases i.e. Phase I (9 indigenous turnkey packages and Phase II (15 indigenous and 5 global turnkey packages). Major production facilities of Phase I have been completed by March, 1994. Out of 15 indigenous packages for Phase II, 9 packages have been completed and 2 packages are partially completed and out of 5 global packages, 2 packages have been completed and 3 packages have been partially completed. The balance work is under various stages of implementation. The modernisation is likely to be completed by April 1997.

The approved Revised Cost Estimates (RCE) of this project is Rs. 3954 crore. The cumulative expenditure till September, 1996 is Rs. 3127 crore.

C. Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL)

The modernisation of Bokaro Steel Plant (Stage I) is being implemented through 4 main global packages and 34 indigenous packages. Design engineering, civil and structural work for the various packages are nearing completion. Equipment supply and its erection are in progress. The modernisation is likely to be completed by July, 1997 as per schedule.

The approval Revised Cost Estimates (RCE) of the project is Rs. 1792.90 crore. The cumulative expenditure till September, 1996 is Rs. 1004.38 crore.

Air Services to Remote and Backward Areas

1085 SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has recently taken a serious note of some of the private scheduled airlines not adhering commitments to operate services to the remote and backward areas.

(b) if so, the details thereof.

(c) whether the Government propose to ensure strict action against those private airlines not adhering to the commitments, and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Airlines operators are free to choose their routes. However, in accordance with the route dispersal guidelines laid down by the Government, all scheduled operators are required to deploy in the North East, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep at least 10% of their capacity deployed on trunk routes. Action is taken against the defaulting airlines who fail to adhere to the said guidelines.

Recently M/s. Modiluft and M/s. Sahara India Airlines operations were cut on trunk routes to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

[Translation]

Free Railway Passes to Freedom Fighters

1086 SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of freedom fighters to whom free railway passes have been issued during 1995-96 till date along with the class of railway journey in which they are entitled to travel, and

(b) the total amount of expenditure borne by railways during each of the last three years due to the extension of above facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a)

No. of freedom fighters	Class of entitlement
47,849	I/II AC

(b) The cost of card passes issued to freedom fighters is borne by Ministry of Home Affairs, which is as under for last three years :

1993-94	=	Rs. 53.04 crores
1994-95	=	Rs. 44.88 crores
1995-96 (upto July '96)	=	Rs. 65.40 crores

Claims Received by Chief Commercial Officer (Claims)

1087 SHRIMATI CHHABILA ARVIND NETAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of different claims received in the office of the Chief Commercial Officer (Claims) Northern Railway from January, 1996, till date, and

(b) the number of claims disposed of/pending out of these?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) 37346 Claims cases have been registered by 31.10.1996.

(b) Number of Claims cases disposed is 32406 and number of pending Claims cases is 4940.

[English]

Telephone Tapping

1088 SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a CBI enquiry was instituted under the instructions of the Prime Minister into the allegations of tapping of telephones of VIPs in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details of the allegations made;

(c) whether CBI has since submitted its report;

(d) if so, the details thereof, and

(e) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The CBI has informed that newspaper reports had appeared in the Asian Age and Sunday Times dated 4.8.96 alleging that telephones of many political leaders are being tapped. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India directed CBI to conduct an impartial enquiry into the alleged telephone tapping during the period from 1.6.1996 onwards. The Special Crime Branch-I of CBI registered a case on 7.8.96.